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Embassy, Vienna

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TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

March 10, 1953

DATE

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Embassy telegram 2645 of March 10, 1953.

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SUBJECT:

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET POLITICAL ADVISER

At the luncheon following the Executive Committee meeting on March 10, a member of the US Embassy staff engaged in a lengthy conversation with Mr. A. I. Aleksandrov, First Secretary of the Soviet Legation and Deputy Political Adviser of the Soviet Element. In the course of the discussion, the normally reticent Aleksandrov appeared eager to expound his views on numerous facets of current US/Soviet tensions. The Department may be especially interested in his statement that, "If the US went to war with China, the USSR would automatically enter the war".

An introductory resume on the Soviet representative and a summary of his remarks are attached hereto as Annex "A".

FOR THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Walter Dowling
Deputy High Commissioner

State Dept. declassification instructions on file

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Incl. No. **Annex "A"**Desp. No. **1554**From **Vienna****MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET POLITICAL ADVISER**

Following the Executive Committee meeting on March 10, a lengthy, informal discussion ensued between Mr. A. I. Aleksandrov, First Secretary of the Soviet Legation and Deputy Political Adviser of the Soviet Element of the Allied Commission, and Mr. Ekern of the US Embassy, regarding current world affairs. The two are representatives of their respective elements in the Political Directorate as well, and have frequently held friendly conversations over the past one and one-half years. Both were members of the Austrian Treaty Commission and of their delegations to the Council of Foreign Ministers in 1947-48 where they first became acquainted.

In the past, Mr. Aleksandrov has proven unusually frank in providing answers to questions put to him, although he may precede his opinions with a pro forma resume of the current "approved view" (Party line). He is exceptionally intelligent, polite, friendly, and civilized. From his considerable time spent in the US, he assumes to know the "American view" and can therefore speak "objectively". He is quiet and reserved, and does not ordinarily initiate discussion topics unless he is obviously in search of information. In further biographic and background information, reference should be made to Annex "A" of Embassy Despatch 748 of October 23, 1952.

At the lunch after the last Executive Committee meeting, Mr. Aleksandrov made an obvious effort to engage Mr. Ekern in a private conversation where the usual pleasantries were followed by a discussion of world tensions. In reply to the US representative's question about Premier Malenkov's policies, Mr. Aleksandrov stated that they would not change from Stalins. "Since the Communist Party establishes policies," he continued, "it is therefore quite impossible for a particular individual to alter the established program". Mr. Ekern did not fully agree, maintaining that it was impossible to entirely eliminate human personality from so influential a position.

Mr. Aleksandrov dwelt on the prospects for peace and war at some length, and concluded gloomily that the immediate future "was a most dangerous time". (Note: This is the third time in 2½ months that Mr. Aleksandrov has expressed apprehension at the imminence of global war, but this last occasion was certainly the most emphatic.) He criticized US armament of Europe and the construction of US bases on the periphery of the USSR.

He then expressed voluble concern that Mr. Eisenhower had publicly stated the US intention of widening the Korean conflict to include hostilities on the Chinese mainland. If the US went to war with China, he said, the USSR would "automatically enter the

Page _____ of _____
Desp. No. _____
From _____

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(Classification)

Page 2 of "A"
Annex
Desp. No. 1554
From Vienna

war". The US representative asked if that meant simply the USSR furnishing equipment and logistical assistance. No, he answered, it would mean all-out war.

Mr. Ekern noted that the USSR was presently furnishing military equipment to Communist China, while the US was correspondingly assisting the Nationalist Chinese. If the two factions began war on the Chinese mainland, thus logistically supported, he asked, would that lead to US-Soviet hostilities? Mr. Aleksandrov acknowledged that Russia was equipping the Chinese Communist Armies, but did not have an answer to the question.

The remainder of the long discussion was taken up with the familiar Soviet complaint against construction of US bases abroad, using the stereotyped comparison of US reaction to comparable Soviet construction on US borders. The questions of a united Europe, military alliances, satellite threats to Europe, peaceful intentions of both the US and USSR, the attitudes of Messrs. Molotov and Beria, and the horrors of atomic warfare were also covered in the exchange. At all times Mr. Aleksandrov was most friendly, and has never been quite so talkative. He volunteered a review of his background, education, military training, and family in the course of the conversation.

END OF ANNEX "A"

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